

Paragraphs: Connecting your ideas

The connecting words within and between paragraphs are known as **transition signals**. They may be single words or phrases. Transition words give your paragraph **coherence** (unity) and demonstrate your writing skills. Moreover, they help the reader of your work to know, for instance, that a sequence of ideas, additional information, an opposite idea, a result or an example follows. You will need to know about:

1. Using transition signals
2. Examples of transition signals and their meaning
3. Placement of transition signals

1. Using transition signals

The TWO paragraphs below show how transition words provide logical organisation of your writing and enhance the meaning of your text. Paragraph 1 is written **WITHOUT** transition signals.

Paragraph 2 is written **WITH** transition signals. While BOTH paragraphs give the same information, it is quite clear that paragraph 2 is easier to understand because the reader is led from one idea to the next by the use of transition signals.

Paragraph 1 - WITHOUT transition words

The concept of fairness is central to understanding plagiarism. Fairness means being fair both to yourself and others. Everybody both gives and receives their proper due, and nobody has anything to complain about. An incident involving unfairness could be taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own. The person whose work has been taken receives no recognition or acknowledgment for their research and thinking. Writers who plagiarise are not being fair to themselves either because they are not developing their own independent academic skills. Students who do their own work with due acknowledgement of the work of others should develop their own academic skills and self-confidence far more than those who merely misuse the work of others.

(Adapted from UNE, 2010 *Avoiding coursework plagiarism and academic misconduct: Advice for students.*)

Additional ideas are following

An example will be given

Paragraph 2 - WITH transition words

The concept of fairness is central to understanding plagiarism. Fairness means being fair both to yourself and others. **Moreover**, everybody both gives and receives their proper due, and nobody has anything to complain about. **For example**, an incident involving unfairness could be taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own. **As a result**, the person whose work has been taken receives no recognition or acknowledgment for their research and thinking. **Furthermore**, writers who plagiarise are not being fair to themselves either because they are not developing their own independent academic skills. **Therefore**, students who do their own work with due acknowledgement of the work of others should develop their own academic skills and self-confidence far more than those who merely misuse the work of others.

(Adapted from UNE, 2010 *Avoiding coursework plagiarism and academic misconduct: Advice for students.*)

A consequence or result
will be discussed

Note the use
of **commas**
to separate
transition
signals from
the rest of
the sentence

2. Examples of transition signals and their meaning

This table provides a few of the most commonly used transition words.

Meaning/function	Examples of sentence connectors	Example sentence
To sequence your ideas	first(ly), second(ly), third(ly), next, then, after this, last(ly), finally, accordingly, meanwhile, henceforth	Students receive a plagiarism warning. After this , penalties apply.
To introduce an additional idea	also, furthermore, additionally, in addition, moreover, similarly, likewise, as well as, besides, another, too	Students, moreover , are expected to seek mandatory counselling.
To introduce an opposite idea or contrast	in contrast, conversely, alternatively, yet, although, even though, nevertheless, notwithstanding, however, on the other hand whereas, while, instead, otherwise	In contrast , inadvertent plagiarism attracts lesser penalties because the students is still learning.
To add a similar idea	comparatively, coupled with, correspondingly, identically, likewise, similar to, together with, equally	Together with this , the university offers students counselling
To introduce an example or illustration	for example, such as, for instance, to demonstrate, namely, in particular, specifically	Inadvertent plagiarism, for example , can be caused by poor paraphrasing skills.
To indicate a consequence or result	consequently, accordingly, as a result, hence, subsequently, therefore, thus, thereupon, as a consequence, for this reason, wherefore	The student submitted another's essay. As a result , a failure was recorded.
To introduce a restatement or explanation	that is, in fact, indeed, namely, specifically, thus	More specifically , it is argued that unauthorised usage of information is
To emphasise or clarify a point	even more, above all, indeed, more importantly, besides	More importantly , the university wishes to assist its students to succeed.
To draw to a close or summarise	to conclude, as a final point, , in brief, in conclusion, indeed, in short, in summary, finally, lastly	Finally , the university is committed to monitoring all academic tasks to eradicate plagiarism.

3. Placement of transition signals

Transition signals are usually placed at the **start** of sentences; however, they may also appear in the **middle** or **end** of sentences. They are ALWAYS SEPARATED from the rest of the sentence by commas. You DO NOT need to use transition words in every sentence in a paragraph; however, good use of transition words will help to make the relationship between the ideas in your writing clear and logical.

For more detailed information on connecting your ideas, go to the Academic Skills website. Click on Academic skills online and select from the academic writing online workshops:

WRITING BASICS: Perfecting paragraphs